

Nov 1995



U.S. REPRESENTATIVE  
**JOHN OLVER**



## Building the First District Economy

Dear Friend:

Good economic news is hard to come by, but lately our economy shows signs of life. The federal deficit is down for the third straight year, the first time since Truman, and Massachusetts unemployment numbers are steadily declining.

For too many working people, the home economic news is not as good. Jobs are still scarce and they are paying less. Seniors still struggle to stretch already limited incomes to cover basic needs and medical bills.

If proposed changes in Washington succeed, the tools working families need to get ahead and the basics seniors need to survive may disappear. Student loans, Medicare and Medicaid, tax credits for low-income working people and veterans health benefits are all vulnerable to cuts. All the while, wealthy individuals and corporations stand to get big tax breaks.

I believe we can balance the federal budget without gouging students, children, seniors and their families. I am fighting back to keep the First District economy moving forward.

Sincerely,

*John*



*Congressman Olver chats with Westfield State College students about the need for an educated workforce in a healthy economy. This Spring Olver joined a campus rally to protest cuts to college loans.*

## Rural Development Makes Communities Ready-For-Business

**R**ural communities need federal help to meet basic needs for job growth. This year, rural development grants and loans helped make repairs to schools in the Gill-Montague School District, built a new police station in Adams and improved water filtration in Lee.

In 1995, our district received over \$43 million dollars in rural development loans and grants, nearly 90 percent of the state's total.

With future federal funding in jeopardy, I led the fight in Congress to preserve these crucial grants and low-interest loans. I sponsored an amendment to the Agriculture Appropriations bill to restore \$60 million to financially-stressed rural communities.

### Water and Sewer Improvement Grants (1995)

• Ashburnham	\$1,839,900
• Lee	\$1,882,800
• West Stockbridge	\$792,000

### Water and Sewer Improvement Loans (1995)

• Ashburnham	\$6,156,100
• Dalton	\$150,000
• Great Barrington	\$500,000
• Lee	\$5,317,200
• West Stockbridge	\$928,000

### Community Facility Loans (1995)

• Adams (police station construction)	\$1,565,000
• Gill-Montague (school improvements)	\$727,000
• Shutesbury (school improvements)	\$551,000



# First District Business Leaders Go to Washington

## Opportunity to Quiz Policy Makers

**N**early 100 business and community leaders got down to business with some of Washington's biggest names in national policy during my First District Business Leaders Seminar in September.

The day-long session was packed with high-profile speakers, including lunch with White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, a Q&A with House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, and a discussion of foreign policy with Massachusetts-bred National Security Advisor Anthony Lake.

Veterans of my bi-annual day in DC agree this year's event was the best yet.

*"I was enormously impressed by the caliber of speakers."*

BARRY ANSIN, LEOMINSTER COMPUTER FIRM.

*"We had a chance to interact with other business leaders from our region and talk about how federal issues affect our businesses."*

ANN HAMILTON,  
FRANKLIN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT

## Agency Heads Pledge Cooperation

**C**abinet secretaries from four critical agencies told our group they want to help us with our economic development projects.

Labor Secretary Robert Reich, Small Business Administrator Phil Lader, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros and Health and Human Services secretary Donna Shalala all pledged to bring the Administration's "public/private partnership" directly to the First District.

Their agencies are working to make their grant and loan programs fit our needs. That's good news for businesses seeking funds to launch new and innovative ideas.

*"We got a lot out of meeting and talking with the people who have the power to change policies that affect us."*

TOM WALLACE, WALLACE REALTY, PITTSFIELD

*"This unique program allowed us to meet and discuss issues – from a Western Mass. point of view – with the men and women who create national policy."*

DORIS RANSFORD,  
HOLYOKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT

## The Other Side of the Dollar Coin



In May, I told the House Banking Committee that public opinion polls and hundreds of thousands of unused Susan B. Anthony dollars are proof that people don't want to replace the dollar bill with a coin. The switch was proposed as a money-saver, but if people don't use the coins, the idea will end up **COSTING** the federal government money!

The case to save the dollar bill really hits home considering the hundreds of First District jobs at risk at Crane Paper Company in Dalton, which makes the paper for dollar bills. If the dollar coin won't save money, it's not worth risking those jobs!

It looks as if they've seen the light for the moment. Both the House and Senate Banking Committees have dropped their dollar coin proposals.

*"Spending the day in Washington with Congressman Olver, his staff, and members of the legislative and executive branches gave me my first feeling of a direct connection with the federal government."*

PAM CLARK, ATHOL BUSINESS-OWNER.

Congressman John Olver wants your views and opinions. Send an email to:  
[olver@hr.house.gov](mailto:olver@hr.house.gov)



## ISSUE UPDATE—Medicare Changes

**T**he House recently passed a budget plan, complete with a \$270 billion cut in Medicare growth and a \$245 billion tax cut, half of which benefits Americans making over \$100,000 per year.

Most people I've talked to don't like the idea of making excessive cuts in Medicare while giving a tax break to people who don't need one.

Some restructuring is necessary to keep Medicare solvent. Prosecution of fraud and abuse should be strengthened, not weakened. But this cut is too much,



*Pamela Bennett of North Adams tells Congressman Olver how cuts in her mother's Medicare benefits would financially break her young family. Lifetime North Adams resident Mary Dailey listens.*

too fast. Experts say our small hospitals can't take such a blow. Doctors fear cuts in payments will force them to provide less care. Young families say without Medicare, their parents' medical bills would break them. Seniors say they can't afford to pay more in premiums. Everyone is justifiably concerned.

The House by no means has the final word. The Senate and the President must also agree. I've listened to the First District and will continue to fight to keep Medicare safe for seniors and their families.

### Medicare Questionnaire

**Major changes to Medicare will affect people from all walks of life: seniors, families with elder parents, and workers and patients in our hospitals and clinics. Please take a moment to answer these important Medicare questions:**

1. Do you believe a seven-year, \$270 billion reduction in Medicare growth is necessary to "save" the Medicare Trust Fund, or that a more modest reduction is sufficient?

☐ \$270 billion cut needed    ☐ More modest reduction

2. Do you support a reduction in growth of Medicare to pay for a tax cut for individuals and corporations?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

3. The House-passed budget includes cuts in each of the following federal spending categories. What categories would you support cutting to balance the federal budget?

SUPPORT    OPPOSE

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare (health care for all seniors)                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid (health care for poor families and destitute seniors)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate and Farm Subsidies   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Aid for Dependent Families (women and infant nutrition, food stamps, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Loans  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Earned Income Tax Credit (for low-income, working people)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans Health Benefits   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Aid  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |

(Note: Defense is scheduled for an increase, and therefore was not included on this list.)

**Please complete the questionnaire, fold (with this panel showing), seal, stamp and mail**

Please print your return address:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please  
Place  
Stamp  
Here

U.S. Representative John Olver  
1027 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

# SBA Funds Are at Work Creating Jobs in the First District

I am committed to making our region's economy stronger and helping people secure good-paying jobs. That's why I work to make low-interest loans from the Small Business Administration available to help small business owners create and keep jobs in western and central Massachusetts.

I secured a \$250,000 SBA loan for the Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund to finance businesses that are too small to get loans from banks. *Bill's Cobbler Shop* in North Adams, *Osqui's Food Market* in Holyoke, *Auto-Medic Repair Shop* in Fitchburg and the *Up Country Store* in

## Getting an SBA Loan 101

In June, my Small Business Conference at Greenfield Community College gave First District business folks a crash course on SBA loans and how to get them. If you missed it, my district office staff would be happy to share their class notes.

Greenfield all got their starts with loans from the Fund.

Four jobs were saved by a \$559,000 SBA loan guarantee for Logistics International, which is located in the Holyoke Free Trade Zone. This financing also allowed the company to purchase its facility for expansion.

When Great Barrington was hit by a devastating Memorial Day tornado, I got the SBA to make nearly \$3.5 million available to help people repair their homes and businesses. Butternut Basin Ski Area and Eagleton School are back in business thanks to over \$1 million in SBA loans.

## Olver Staff Ready to Help

The First District has an Economic Development Team ready to get new companies started and help existing businesses grow.

My team is working to create jobs and helping communities combat crime, improve health care and protect natural resources.

### ...And Cut Red Tape



The Economic Development Team also works hard to help people cut through red tape. We rescued a Berkshire entrepreneur with help from the SBA, convinced HUD to release a \$1.2 million loan guarantee in time for Westfield's downtown project to go forward and got the FDIC to return \$45,000 plus \$15,000 interest to the town of Templeton. If you need help, my district offices are a good place to start. Call Congressman John Olver's Economic Development Team:

in Holyoke, 413-532-7010 • in Pittsfield, 413-442-0946 • in Fitchburg, 508-342-8722



Congressman Olver joins local officials from Fitchburg and Leominster at groundbreaking ceremonies for a transportation hub that will enhance the regional economy. Olver secured \$1 million in federal funds to make the project possible.

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Official Business



*John W. Olver*

M.C.  
Bulk Rate  
Car-Rt. Presort

Postal Patron  
1st Congressional District  
Massachusetts